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ABSTRACT

This document states the position of the National Association of Elementary School Principals regarding the essential ingredients of a fine elementary or middle school. It combines the findings of current research on effective schooling with the practical, onsite experience of working principals. After a brief introduction, these standards are grouped into seven major categories: organization, leadership, curriculum, instruction, training and development, school climate, and evaluation and assessment. Contained within these 7 categories are 21 "standards of excellence," each accompanied by a number of "quality indicators" useful for assessing the extent to which a particular standard is being met. Appendixes provide (1) a checklist for assessing the extent to which a particular school meets these standards, and (2) a guide for developing a school improvement plan. (TE)

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STANDARDS FOR

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

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FOREWORD

This document states the position of the National Association of Elementary School Principals regarding the essential ingredients of a fine elementary or middle school. It combines the findings of current research on effective schooling with the practical, on-site experience of working principals.

Our goal in producing **Standards for Quality Elementary Schools** has been to provide guidelines for bringing about constructive change at the kindergarten through eighth-grade levels. In particular, we see two uses for it:

1. To give states, school districts, boards of education, and citizens means for determining the degree to which their schools possess the ingredients necessary for achieving educational excellence;

2. To help individual principals assess the status of their schools as the starting-point for a comprehensive, continuing effort aimed at enhancing educational opportunities for their students.

Since each school's student enrollment comprises a unique blend of distinctive human beings and local conditions, the Standards cannot validly be used to compare one school's performance with that of another.

Nor should an assessment based on these Standards replace the formal self-study required for regional school accreditation. NAESP believes that evaluation and voluntary accreditation are indispensable to the establishment, maintenance, and constant improvement of elementary and middle schools. Consequently, we urge principals and boards of education to seek accreditation, for two purposes: to obtain an impartial, outsiders' view of school quality, and to win recognition for superior performance.

A final word: we regard this statement as a living document, one which – like our schools themselves – requires constant renewal and refinement. It provides the basis for further NAESP exploration of useful approaches to professional development for elementary and middle school principals, in regard to both basic preparation and inservice training.

We warmly welcome suggestions for improving this position statement, and would be grateful for accounts of how it has been put to use.

James L. Doud
President

Samuel G. Sava
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

Since the nation's earliest days, American schools have been treasured as basic to the strength and survival of our democratic form of government.

Recently this concern for our system of public education has been evidenced in numerous wide-ranging reports, many of them critical of the schools and calling for widespread reforms. Too many students, several of the reports suggested, leave the classroom unprepared either to sustain themselves or to help sustain our society.

While elementary and middle schools have escaped much of this criticism, the obvious fact is that the classroom performance of high school students depends to a significant degree on whether they acquired a strong foundation for future learning and productivity during the period between kindergarten and the eighth grade. In short, there is a connection between success in high school, in college, and in life . . . and the provision of solid academic preparation by a quality elementary school.

But what makes such a school? How is it different from other schools? Is there a "model" that can be used to establish quality K-8 learning experiences throughout the country? Are there certain standards that schools must meet if they are to provide quality education for their students?

With such questions in mind, and recognizing the determinant role of elementary schooling, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in September 1983 launched a Standards Project aimed at identifying those factors that make the difference between a successful school and one that needs a change in direction. With the cosponsorship of the Johnson Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the U.S. Department of Education, NAESP organized a lead-off conference at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. The discussions at this gathering focused on the current state of elementary education from a variety of perspectives – curriculum, accreditation, and research among them – and from the varying viewpoints of teachers, principals, parents, and representatives of community and civic groups.

The Wingspread Conference served as an unofficial beginning for the work of the NAESP Standards Committee, composed of a selected group of elementary and middle school educators. In its deliberations the Standards Committee kept in mind the following basic premises:

- To merit a "quality" rating a school must focus its program on the particular needs of the individual children who attend that school.
- Standards of quality should take into account both the available research data on effective schools and the practical knowledge and insights of experienced elementary school principals and other educators; it is essential to capitalize on the wisdom of persons who work with children on a daily basis.
- Because quality schools do not exist in isolation from the rest of the community, ideas and opinions must be solicited from "outside" groups that have a stake in the success of the schools.

Based on the deliberations of the Standards Committee and the invaluable observations of an array of prominent educators who provided comments and reactions, NAESP has arrived at certain basic conclusions. We suggest that quality elementary schools – by which term we include middle schools as well – may be very different from one

another in organization and character, and that these differences properly reflect the diversity and individualism that has long been a part of our national ethos. We believe that a quality school comes about only if there is a commitment on the part of all the persons and groups affected by that school. Quality schools, we would note, are never satisfied that all is well. They are continually seeking to improve, to find better ways of meeting the changing needs of their students and the communities in which they are located.

Accompanying the differences among quality schools are many commonalities – characteristics that no quality school is without. It is these characteristics that form the core of NAESP's **Standards for Quality Elementary Schools: Kindergarten through Eighth Grade** and that are recommended as targets for which every elementary school should aim.

These standards have been grouped into seven major categories: Organization, Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Training and Development, School Climate, and Evaluation and Assessment.

Contained within these seven categories are 21 "standards of excellence." Each standard is accompanied by a number of "quality indicators" useful for assessing the extent to which a particular standard is being met.

NAESP believes that thoughtful observers will be able to identify each of the 21 "standards of excellence" within every quality school. This is not necessarily the case, however, in regard to the "quality indicators." These are simply intended to provide an indication of the current status of a particular standard and to cite some of the characteristics that might well be considered in a campaign to improve the quality of a particular school's program.

Appendix A of the report provides a checklist that principals, teachers, parents, or others can use to assess the extent to which their particular school meets the **Standards for Quality Elementary Schools.** Appendix B also provides a guide that may be useful in the development of a plan for the improvement of the school.

While NAESP does not assume that our standards are flawless, we would stress that they reflect intense consideration, well informed thought, and expert analysis. They offer a basic instrument for persons or groups interested in working to strengthen our nation by improving the quality of our schools.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of a quality elementary school arises from that school's educational philosophy and is designed to meet the specific needs of its students.

Toward that end, the organizational pattern is based on written goals developed cooperatively by the school staff and parents, and is consistent with the philosophy of the overall school system.

The fundamental responsibility for establishing such an organization lies with the school's principal, and in a quality school the principal effectively integrates and coordinates instruction, administration, and day-to-day operations to fulfill the written goals.

The complexities and magnitude of this assignment are such that each school must be assigned its own principal; dual principalships are inherently incompatible with quality. Moreover, when the enrollment of an individual school reaches 400, the preservation of quality may very well require additional administrative staff in order to meet the increased demands on the principal's time and energies. The type of administrative assistance provided should allow the principal to continue to focus on instructional leadership.

The quality school's academic year calls for a minimum of 180 days, each entailing a minimum of five hours of instructional time – that is, exclusive of such activities as checking roll, recess, and lunch. Equally important, those five hours are dominated by appropriate learning activities; this learning time is carefully protected against interruptions.

To enable teachers to do their jobs skillfully, time is specifically allocated for preparation and for inservice training. The school year includes at least ten days in excess of pupil instructional days to provide teachers time for planning, staff development, and conferences. During the school day, time is scheduled for daily planning and for consultation, in addition to the time with students. A teacher's typical working day is eight hours.

The grouping patterns within the school allow for learning at individual levels of need (but not on a track basis). Students may move from group to group, depending on the educational purposes to be served; grouping patterns do not lock students in. The best placement is one that challenges the student's learning capacities.

Promotion and retention policies are clearly defined, written, disseminated, and followed. They include such factors as age, achievement, social adjustment, parental support, alternative programs, and teacher recommendations. Early identification and provision for prevention and remedial programs are planned, understood, and implemented.

While class size alone is not the determining factor, research shows that more learning takes place when classes are small and are combined with the use of varied teaching styles. Despite the financial implications demanded by lower class sizes, the practical experience of principals strongly supports efforts to encourage maximum class sizes that are even lower than the recommended 20 students to one classroom teacher.

The needs of students may vary from school to school within a district. Professional and classified personnel who are well trained for their positions are provided in sufficient numbers to meet identified student and program needs.

Parent and community volunteers play an important role in the school's program. Their activities are planned, supervised, and coordinated.

While school-based decision making is ultimately the responsibility of the principal, in quality elementary schools decisions are based on data from parents, teachers, and students. Financial planning is conducted on both short-term and long-term bases. Local, state, and federal levels must share responsibilities, as appropriate, for assuring that financial resources are available to meet the needs of students.

In all of these matters the emphasis is on creating an organization that carries out a carefully thought-out philosophy of education and fulfills specific learning objectives. The driving concern is the progress of children.

Standard of Excellence:

There Is a Written Statement of the School's Beliefs and Goals.

Quality Indicators:

- A copy of the statement is available.
- The statement has been developed cooperatively, with contributions from groups within the school community.
- The statement reflects staff consensus.
- Staff members can:
  1) articulate the beliefs and goals,
  2) state specific instructional and noninstructional activities directed toward meeting those beliefs and goals, and
  3) cite assessment procedures that monitor student performance.
- The statement is reviewed at least annually.
- The statement is consistent with the school district's philosophy.
- The stated goals are used in planning the school's educational objectives and activities.

Standard of Excellence:

Sufficient Numbers of Well-Qualified Personnel Are Provided to Fulfill the School's Goals.

Quality Indicators:

- Staff members are qualified by training and background for the positions to which they are assigned.
- Each school has its own full-time principal.
- Classroom teachers are assigned to the school on a maximum 20:1 pupil/classroom teacher ratio.
- Actual pupil/classroom teacher ratio may vary from class to class with younger children receiving priority for a lower ratio.
- Instructional specialists are assigned based on student needs and programs (i.e., art, music, physical education, reading, media specialists, and others).
- Other professional staff are assigned to the school based on student needs (i.e., nurse, psychologist, social worker, counselor, special education teachers).
- Classified staff are provided commensurate with the size of the school and the nature of its programs (i.e., secretarial, custodial, paraprofessional, cafeteria).
- When student enrollment reaches 400, additional administrative assistance is provided to the principal.
- Parent and community volunteers play an active role in the school's program.

Standard of Excellence:

Placement and Grouping Practices Are Determined by Student Needs.

Quality Indicators:

Placement and Assignment

- The placement and assignment of students to classes and teacher reflect an assessment of each student's needs and each teacher's skills.
- The principal assigns students using information from teachers and parents.

Grouping Practices

- There is a written statement of grouping policies based on the school's organizational philosophy.
- Current research regarding grouping practices is used in developing these policies.
- Grouping practices are flexible and serve the varying and changing needs and abilities of students.

Promotion/Retention

- Promotion and retention policies are stated in writing, disseminated to all concerned, and followed.
- These policies take into account such factors as age, achievement, social adjustment, parental support, alternative programs, and teacher recommendations.
- The procedures for retention are clearly specified.
- Preventive or remedial programs are provided as soon as their need becomes evident.

Standard of Excellence:

Sufficient Time Is Allocated to Accomplish the School's Educational Objectives.

Quality Indicators:

- The school day provides time for meeting the school's stated objectives and requires at least five hours of instructional time exclusive of recess and the lunch period. (The time for less than full-day kindergarten is prorated.)
- The school year provides a minimum of 180 instructional days to meet stated objectives.
- The teacher's duty day is typically eight hours.
- The number of teacher-contract days allows at least ten days in excess of the pupil instruction days. These days are used for staff development, planning, and conferences.
- Principals are employed as full-time employees.
- Interruptions during academic learning time are kept to a minimum.
- Class time is used for appropriate learning tasks.

The principal is the one individual who is directly involved in every aspect of the school's operation, and therefore is the primary figure in determining the school's quality and character.

Principals in quality elementary schools exhibit strong leadership; they inspire those around them to become immersed in the school's mission and dedicated to its attainment. Through their attitudes and conduct they demonstrate the values and beliefs that are at the core of the school's operations and expectations. Their responsibilities extend beyond the classroom into the community, particularly with regard to parents, civic leaders, the media, other building administrators, and the school district's central administration.

Principals in quality elementary schools convey high expectations for students, teachers, and other members of the staff; all feel both challenged and inspired to excel. The characteristics of these principals include enthusiasm, initiative, a good sense of humor, self-confidence, optimism, consideration for others, and above all a deep and abiding concern for what is best for the students.

The principal in a quality K-8 school places highest priority on instructional leadership, creatively organizing the human and material resources necessary to provide an outstanding school program and inspire in students a lasting interest in learning. The principal is active not only in developing the school's curriculum but in carrying it out, working closely with teachers in determining effective instructional strategies. On a day-to-day basis the principal is a frequent classroom observer and regularly confers with teachers on ways to improve instruction. The principal has a thorough knowledge of research findings on effective instructional practices, and guides teachers in applying them in the classroom.

The principal in a quality school actively promotes professional development for teachers and staff and encourages attendance at workshops and other development activities. Such principals work cooperatively with teachers and staff to plan and organize inservice activities focused on the school's mission. They are at the same time attentive to their own professional development, continually seeking to enhance their knowledge through graduate course work and through participation in workshops, seminars, and discussions. Characteristically, they are active in the leadership of their professional association.

Principals in quality schools are good organizers, making maximum use of available resources. They see time as an irreplaceable commodity – to be allocated sparingly to noninstructional aspects of the school operations. Such principals are sound problem-solvers and are able to make decisions based on the information at hand. They have established effective communications with all segments of the school system and with the community at large, explaining both their schools' accomplishments and needs. They are able to win both community and financial support for present school programs and for new ones needed to keep pace with changing circumstances.

And finally, recognizing that leadership should be shared, principals of quality schools encourage leadership on the part of others – students, teachers, staff, and involved parents – in order to accomplish the school's mission. The focus of these principals is firmly fixed on assuring children an elementary school experience of the highest quality.

Standard of Excellence:

The Principal's Values, Beliefs, and Personal Characteristics Inspire People to Accomplish the School's Mission.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal knows and follows the NAESP Code of Ethics.
- The principal can articulate his or her personal values and beliefs when asked.

The principal demonstrates

1) a sense of humor
2) self-confidence
3) enthusiasm
4) optimism
5) initiative
6) respect for others
7) consideration for the feelings of others
8) recognition and appreciation of the accomplishments of others
9) a high energy quotient
10) innovativeness

- The principal conveys high expectations for students, staff, and self.

Standard of Excellence:

The Principal Demonstrates Skills that Enable the School to Reach Its Goals.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal knows and helps teachers implement the curriculum.
- The principal knows and facilitates effective instructional practices.
- The principal observes classrooms on a regular basis.
- The principal confers with teachers immediately following observations, reinforcing effective practices and remediating ineffective ones.
- The principal employs techniques to promote efficient
  1) deployment of students, staff, and volunteers
  2) use of materials and equipment
  3) operation of plant and facilities
  4) scheduling of time
- The principal uses a variety of techniques to identify and resolve problems.
- The principal applies valid research findings to school practices.
- The principal makes decisions based on relevant information and existing conditions.
- The principal is able to communicate effectively with all segments of the school and the community, and welcomes communications from those groups.
- The principal encourages leadership by students, teachers, and community members.

Solid achievement on the part of students comes about because of the joint efforts of many people – not just a few.

To assure that professional staff work productively and harmoniously, and in concert with the total school's goals and expectations, there must be a well-defined curriculum that is followed by the staff in a coordinated fashion. Therein lies much of the difference between an outstanding school and a mediocre one.

The curriculum is what the staff and the community want students to learn, what skills they are to master, and what values, attitudes, and habits they are to acquire. In a quality school, the curriculum will have been written and formally adopted – incorporated in a set of documents that describe what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. Considerable effort will have been devoted to building the curriculum around specific, measurable learning objectives that have been set forth for every subject at every grade level, along with expected student performance levels.

In quality schools the curriculum has been determined in a professional, cooperative manner by the staff, the district administration, and the district's governing board – following consultation with parents and other members of the community. All members of the staff know and understand the curriculum and are aware of the responsibilities it imposes on them. Teachers' implementation of curriculum is monitored regularly to assure, among other things, that they use the adopted curriculum guides and courses of study in developing their instructional plans – such plans being re-examined on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis.

Student progress is measured regularly by tests and other forms of assessment; where indicated, the results lead to modifications in the curriculum, in teaching techniques, and in strategies. The selection of instructional materials, textbooks, computer software, and other teaching aids is matched to the learning objectives specified in the curriculum.

The principal provides strong leadership in planning and organizing the curriculum; in securing appropriate resources of time, money, and materials to support it; and in regularly evaluating established goals. The principal ensures that the curriculum responds to the needs and abilities of the children involved, and that it provides an environment of excellence in which all children are encouraged to develop to their maximum potential. The curriculum is exciting and motivating – challenging students to reach out to new horizons.

In general, a sound curriculum in a quality school benefits the students in the following ways:

- Students develop a strong foundation in the fundamentals of reading, writing, and mathematics; and they acquire basic knowledge and understanding in science, social studies, fine arts, health, and physical education.
- They become competent verbal and nonverbal communicators – learning to express themselves well in speaking, reading, and writing, to be attentive listeners, and to be at home with information technology, especially computers and television.
- Students work in an environment of excellence marked by high expectations and persistent striving toward mastery levels of achievement.
- They become self-motivated, learn to take advantage of

opportunities for personal development, and emerge with a lasting zest for learning.

- They respect and demonstrate appreciation for their peers, their teachers, the staff, and the educational process itself; they practice tolerance, flexibility, empathy, and equality. And,
- Students develop positive self-concepts, recognize and value their own uniqueness, and accept both their capabilities and their limitations.

Standard of Excellence:
There Is an Approved Curriculum that Defines What Teachers Are to Teach and What Children Are to Learn.

Quality Indicators:

- The curriculum is written and is used in planning the instructional program.
- The curriculum was developed cooperatively by the principal and the school staff, in consultation with parents.
- The curriculum identifies all areas of learning that are taught in the school.
- The established learning objectives are appropriate for the growth level of the individual child.
- All teachers work together for a continuum of learning.

Standard of Excellence:
The Curriculum Includes Experiences that Provide Children with Basic Skills Necessary to Function Effectively in Our Society.

Quality Indicators:

- Communication skills include the ability to read, write, speak, spell, and listen.
- Mathematics instruction emphasizes computation, application, and problem-solving skills.
- Science instruction includes an inquiry approach to the study of the natural and physical world.
- Social studies instruction includes study of the interrelationships of peoples and cultures to the historical, geographic, and economic factors in the environment.
- Fine arts instruction includes visual arts, music, dance, and drama.
- Health and physical education instruction, emphasizing motor development skills, provides opportunities to develop lifelong habits of healthy living.
- Decision-making techniques are taught through problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills.
- Children take responsibility for their own education and are helped to develop strong study skills, use time efficiently, and complete tasks.
- All aspects of the curriculum make use of a comprehensive multimedia center and information technology.

Standard of Excellence:
The Curriculum Includes Experiences that Enable Children to Grow in Knowledge, Understanding, and Appreciation of Themselves and Others.

Quality Indicators:

- Children have respect and appreciation for other students, teachers, staff, property, and the educational process.
- Children have healthy, positive self-concepts that enable them to feel successful academically, personally, and socially.
- Children recognize and value their own uniqueness and accept both their capabilities and limitations.

Standard of Excellence:
There Is a Plan for Monitoring, Assessing, and Supervising Implementation of the Curriculum.

Quality Indicators:

- The instructional program is monitored to assure use of the written curriculum.
- Appropriate instructional materials are provided and used to reinforce the objectives of the curriculum.
- Teachers demonstrate thorough understanding of the written curriculum.
- Teachers use instructional techniques and strategies that are relevant to the curricular objectives and to research-based principles of learning.
- Teachers use formal and informal evaluation techniques and instruments to measure the curriculum's success.

Standard of Excellence:
The Curriculum Is Supported by Adequate Financial and Material Resources.

Quality Indicators:

- Budget allocations are sufficient to meet the needs generated by the curriculum.
- Appropriate and relevant materials are available for each student.
- The school makes use of appropriate resources from other educational institutions, parents, business, industry, and service clubs.
- Equipment, supplies, and services needed to support the curriculum are readily available.
- The school principal, with staff involvement, determines the expenditure of funds available to accomplish the school's mission.

INSTRUCTION

In quality schools, instruction is led by the principal and is shaped by clearly defined goals and objectives.

These goals and objectives:

- Provide a framework for student achievement,
- Help teachers plan and provide instruction that reflects the school's mission, and
- Ensure that students learn to derive joy and satisfaction from learning.

Teachers jointly plan with students and parents the instructional objectives for each student. Progress toward the achievement of those objectives is reported regularly to the students and their parents by both informal and formal methods. Students are expected to achieve their potential; they are held accountable for completing their assignments; they recognize that they have a responsibility for their own progress in school.

The program of instruction is consistent with the outcomes identified by the principal and the instructional staff as basic to the achievement of the school's mission, and it is expressed in a cooperatively established curriculum.

There is a strong focus on academics, as indicated by a high percentage of time spent on learning and a minimum of time lost during the school day for noninstructional activities. Teachers are able to carry on the business of the classroom free from outside interruptions and distractions.

The principal, teachers, and staff believe that all students can learn; the students are expected to be successful. As part of that expectation, teachers plan and implement instructional strategies that are matched both to the curriculum and to each student's individual needs.

All instruction is based on specific objectives geared to levels of difficulty and complexity appropriate for the particular pupils involved. Each student's learning needs are diagnosed through valid assessment techniques. These assessments form the basis for instruction that takes into account individual learning styles and rates of learning.

All teachers employ instructional methods demonstrated by research to be effective. At the beginning of each lesson the teacher explains how the new facts, ideas, and concepts relate to what has been learned previously, and how the new learning will be useful. Adequate time is spent presenting, demonstrating, and explaining.

The students are routinely shown models of what they are expected to produce, and they are told the criteria by which their performance will be rated. Under the guidance of the teacher, students are given ample opportunity to put what they are learning into practice. Any required corrections are made immediately.

Homework is assigned for the specific purpose of having students apply the skills and concepts that have been taught during the school day, thereby reinforcing the student's progress. Students have a thorough understanding of the content of their homework assignments and what they are expected to produce. Completed homework assignments are corrected, reviewed for student learning, and returned to the students promptly.

Teachers actively monitor their students' progress, and adjust their

teaching accordingly. Effective use is made of the principles of motivation and reinforcement. Teachers approach their work with enthusiasm and creativity, employing a variety of grouping patterns ranging from the entire class to one-to-one instruction. Teachers use direct instruction as the primary approach to teaching basic skills, as contrasted with program or student-directed activities.

The principal in a quality school is well versed in effective instructional practices and is an able guide for the teachers in applying these practices. The principal regularly conducts classroom observations and helps teachers identify the differences between effective and ineffective approaches and explores possible alternatives for instructional improvement. As the school's instructional leader, the principal helps the teachers make every classroom a stimulating learning environment where teachers truly teach and learners truly learn.

Standard of Excellence:
Teachers Plan and Provide Effective Instruction to Accomplish the School's Mission

Quality Indicators:

- Teachers believe all students can learn and expect them to succeed.
- Teachers use appropriate instructional strategies relevant to the objectives of the curriculum.
- Teachers allow sufficient time to present fully, demonstrate, and explain new content and skills.
- Teachers allow adequate opportunity to practice and master new skills.
- Teachers actively monitor student performance, give immediate response, and adjust instruction accordingly.
- Teachers use a variety of instructional grouping patterns, ranging from whole class to one-to-one instruction.
- Teachers continually diagnose academic needs and prescribe appropriate educational activities for individual students, considering learning styles and rates of learning.
- Teachers identify students with special needs and provide appropriate support.
- Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to create an orderly and comfortable classroom environment, conducive to learning.

Standard of Excellence:
Students Are Taught How to Learn and to Value Learning.

Quality Indicators:

- Students believe they can learn.
- Students understand that they share the responsibility for successful learning.
- Students are held accountable for doing quality work.
- Students give evidence of being able to apply what they have learned.

Standard of Excellence:
The Instructional Program Assures the Attainment of Desired Student Outcomes.

Quality Indicators:

- The instructional program carries out the goals of the school district.
- Written and measurable educational objectives have been established and are consistent with the school's goals.
- Learning tasks are analyzed. Materials and activities used are linked to the objectives and goals of the curriculum.
- There is a heavy stress on academic learning. Minimal time is lost to such routines as taking roll, distributing supplies, and changing from one activity to another.
- Appropriate homework related to the school curriculum is assigned, corrected, reviewed for student learning, and returned promptly.
- Students are taught critical-thinking skills.

Education can be thought of as human resource development – helping people to develop to their full potential.

In quality elementary schools, such development is considered not only in connection with students but toward enhancing the talents of the men and women responsible for educating these students.

Thus, quality schools have as a regular part of their operations professional development programs designed to help staff members refine and update the skills they bring to their classrooms. Staff development receives high priority not just in theory but in practice.

Statistical trends show that the vast majority of teachers and principals who will be responsible for K-8 education through the turn of this century already are at work in our schools. Therefore, it is essential that schools maintain and increase the effectiveness of all employees through well-designed programs of staff development. Such programs focus on emerging as well as established knowledge, and address needs specifically identified by the persons who will participate in them.

Recent research has consistently found that effective schools are led by principals who provide strong instructional leadership toward establishing and maintaining quality programs. The principal emerges as being basic to the development of high expectations for student achievement and staff effectiveness, to the building of consensus concerning the school's mission, and to stimulating superior work by staff and superior attainment by students. Principals cannot maintain effective leadership, however, without being given opportunities to grow professionally – to develop the skills demanded by their jobs.

The leadership tasks required of principals means that they must be sensitive to the individual needs of students and members of the staff. Because the presence of a strong principal is a key factor in a quality school, NAESP believes that – despite an economic factor that cannot be completely ignored – it is unrealistic to expect a principal to provide the human support and instructional leadership necessary to administer more than one elementary school successfully.

For all staff, the most effective professional development programs are locally designed and specifically created to match the needs of participants with the mission of the school. Quality schools also recognize that a key to sustained staff development is training. Such training enables teachers and principals to observe and coach one another on skills that will contribute to improved performance on the job. Planning for such programs requires that the principal and staff carefully assess their needs, and provide opportunities and experiences based on those needs. And finally, evaluation of the effectiveness of these staff development programs must be based on desirable changes observed in the classroom.

In addition to locally specific staff development programs, teachers and principals in quality elementary schools are encouraged to join professional organizations and are given opportunities to participate actively in those organizations. Such involvement assures that the individual remains abreast of current thinking in the field, and the sharing of such information helps promote interest in professional development among other staff members.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals recognizes the need for strengthing current undergraduate and graduate

preparation programs for teachers and administrators, to ensure that persons entering the profession are provided with high quality training. NAESP hopes that persons responsible for creating such training programs will use its **Standards for Quality Elementary Schools: Kindergarten through Eighth Grade** as a basis for developing course content and experiences for teachers and principals.

Standard of Excellence:

Each School Has a Full-Time, Well-Qualified Principal.

Quality Indicators:

- The main focus of the principal is instructional leadership that increases teaching excellence.
- A principal's assignment is restricted to one school.
- The principal is qualified by training and background for this responsibility.
- The principal's experience includes at least three successful years of teaching at the elementary or middle school level.
- The principal actively pursues a program of professional development on a yearly basis.
- The principal is a member of local, state, and national professional associations and actively participates in their work.

Standard of Excellence:

Each School Has an Effective Staff Development Program for All Members of the Staff.

Quality Indicators:

Staff

- The design of the program is based on needs assessments and includes recommendations by the participants.
- The staff is routinely provided information regarding valid research and current practice.
- Inservice training programs incorporate knowledge of adult learning patterns and are relevant to actual responsibilities.
- Time and financial resources for staff development are provided within and outside the school day.
- Staff development programs are evaluated for effectiveness.
- The effectiveness of staff development programs is validated through improved teaching practices.
- Programs include training that prepares teachers to observe and coach one another on skills related to the goals of the school.

Principals

- Staff development opportunities are provided and are based on identified job responsibilities.
- Time and financial resources are provided for attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences; for subscriptions to professional journals; and for contact with other principals and administrators.

- Training and development programs include such competencies as the following:
  1) organizational theory, planning, and application
  2) instructional leadership
  3) evaluation of programs and personnel
  4) professional and staff development
  5) school law and political relationships
  6) fiscal management
  7) management of human and material resources
  8) cultural and socioeconomic diversity
- Evaluations of training and development programs are based on subsequent performance on the job.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

School climate may be defined as those qualities of a school that affect the attitudes, behavior, and achievement of the people involved in its operation—students, staff, parents, and members of the community.

The standard of excellence for School Climate differs from other standards because climate is an abstract concept. Thus climate indicators may not be as easily identifiable as some of the other quality indicators listed in this report. Nevertheless, a favorable school climate is recognizable; staff and students in a quality school care for, respect, and trust one another. The result is high morale and continuous social and academic growth for all.

A caring atmosphere permeates the school. The principal sets an example by showing an interest in all teachers, students, and parents. Those involved with the school value able performance by others. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents are all encouraged to accomplish their tasks successfully.

Genuine respect for individual differences exists among teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Staff and students alike are encouraged to develop a sense of self-worth, and equal learning opportunities are provided for all students.

The level of trust is high. The principal trusts both teachers and students, and that trust is reciprocated. Feelings, concerns, and conflicts are given fair and consistent attention.

In quality schools the morale is high: students are enthusiastic about learning, teachers are enthusiastic about teaching, and parents are eager to become involved in school activities.

Students in quality schools follow a code of behavior that has been written through the collaborative efforts of children, parents, teachers, and principal. This code is administered fairly and consistently by the principal and staff members. Children know that the principal and staff stand ready to provide advice and counsel, or simply to listen when they need to talk.

Students' academic growth is of primary interest to the principal and teachers in a quality school. Learning is celebrated throughout the building by attractively displayed student work. Attendance in such a school is high, and vandalism is negligible. Student mastery is supported, and failures are few.

The presence of these qualities is characterized by a true school spirit, a sense of cohesiveness that exists throughout the school. The actions and words of both staff and students indicate that they would rather be at this school than at any other.

Standard of Excellence:

The School's Environment Encourages the Capabilities and Emphasizes the Worth of All Individuals.

Quality Indicators:

Caring

- A plan exists to promote school/community interaction.
- Joint school/community activities take place regularly.
- Parents feel welcome in the school.
- Parents work cooperatively with teachers and students to develop plans for student progress.
- Parent education programs that meet the needs of the school community are provided.

Respect

- Faculty and staff are committed to the mission of the school.
- Students and school personnel show mutual respect for each other.
- Conflict resolution procedures are applied fairly and consistently.
- The physical plant and school grounds are:
  1) clean
  2) aesthetically pleasing
  3) safe
  4) well-maintained

Trust

- Students are enthusiastic about learning.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching.
- Parents demonstrate interest in and concern for their children's school.

Morale

- Student, staff, and community morale is high.
- Students and school personnel support one another and work together harmoniously.
- School pride is evident among students, staff, and community.
- The teachers and the principal know and address students by name.

Social Development

- School personnel serve as models and reward appropriate behavior.
- There is a written code of conduct.
- The code is developed cooperatively by students, staff, and parents.
- The code is followed consistently.
- Students, staff, and parents accept and share responsibility for discipline.
- Discipline is used as a tool for learning rather than punishment.

Academic Development

- The accomplishments of students and school personnel are appropriately recognized.
- Student work is attractively displayed.
- Attendance by students and staff is high.
- Students and staff are aware that outstanding performance is expected of them.
- Students and staff expect to be successful.
- School personnel believe that all children can learn.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

An effective school gathers and uses information to help determine whether to continue particular programs and practices, and as a guide to modifications that will improve them.

Evaluation serves as a systematic process of determining if expectations are being met. It involves setting standards, identifying levels of performance both above and below these standards, selecting courses of action to deal with below-standard performance, continual monitoring of progress, and assessing accomplishments. Evaluation is used by effective schools to determine if they are making the kind of contribution to their students and the community for which they were established.

In appraising students, good schools use a variety of instruments and approaches – among them, teacher-designed tests to check student mastery of particular learning objectives; competency tests to determine a fundamental level of skill and knowledge deemed necessary before students progress to a higher grade; and commercially prepared (sometimes called "standardized") tests to compare the progress of students in a particular school with that of students in a larger group, such as within the state or the nation at large.

The best schools select testing programs that reflect local educational objectives. That is, they test what students have been taught, thus obtaining the kinds of data best adapted to planning and improving programs. Such schools report test results regularly, and in terms the public can readily grasp.

Outstanding schools monitor student achievement in such a way as to make it possible to report each student's progress in relation to a particular grade level, to the established expectations for the course involved, or to a student's individual education plan.

Assessments of student progress are important not only for what they reveal about the progress of individual students but also for what they say about the overall school program. Similar clues are provided by evaluation of the school staff. In regard to teachers, the evaluation plans of quality schools rely heavily on observations of teachers in a teaching situation. Although research findings are somewhat equivocal concerning the characteristics of effective teachers, those in quality elementary schools are distinguished by clarity of presentation and thorough knowledge of subject matter.

In quality elementary schools, evaluations of students, teachers, and principals are focused on improvement; they are seen as essential elements in a process for determining whether objectives have been met. They do not compare one person to another, and they do not produce stigmas. Inherent in the quality school's evaluation process are procedures for remediation and modification. When needed, appropriate assistance is immediately available for any student, teacher, or principal.

Evaluation and assessment in quality elementary schools are handled with care and sensitivity. They are used to facilitate progress, and all concerned understand not only the purposes of the evaluation but the particular processes and instruments involved. Evaluation in such a school is as commonplace and acceptable as the program of instruction.

Standard of Excellence:
Evaluation Data Are Used to Improve the School's Program.

Quality Indicators:

- Validated evaluation techniques and instruments are used routinely.
- The evaluation process includes self-examination as well as assessment by external sources.
- Evaluations relate to the attainment of particular goals.
- Various kinds of assessments are used.
- The results of teacher-made and curricular specific tests are used to make instructional decisions.
- Standardized tests are used to provide comparative data.
- Results of evaluations are made available to all interested parties.

Standard of Excellence:
Student Assessment and Evaluation Are Based on Mastery of Defined Objectives of the Curriculum.

Quality Indicators:

- Mastery assessments and the curriculum are matched.
- Common criteria for curriculum mastery and student evaluation are written, distributed, and followed.
- Assessment results are used to develop appropriate educational plans for each student.
- The results of assessment and evaluation are reported to parents.
- A cumulative academic record is maintained for each student.
- Positive recognition is given to students as they master curriculum objectives.

Standard of Excellence:
A Fair and Systematic Procedure Is Followed for the Evaluation of All Teachers.

Quality Indicators:

- Each teacher knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.
- Evaluation is based on observed performance, amount of assistance given, and what students have learned.
- The evaluation process is cooperative and positive.
- The system of evaluation distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.
- A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.
- There are written procedures that provide due process for dismissing incompetent teachers.
- There is a reward system for teaching performance significantly above the norm.

Standard of Excellence:

A Fair and Systematic Procedure Is Followed for the Evaluation of All Principals.

Quality Indicators:

- Each principal knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.
- Evaluation is based on the degree to which the school grows in accomplishing its mission.
- Evaluation is based on firsthand data and evidence.
- The system of evaluation distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.
- A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.
- There are written procedures that provide due process for dismissing incompetent principals.
- Performance significantly above the norm is rewarded.

As was stated in the introduction, NAESP believes that quality schools are never satisfied that all is well. They are continually seeking to improve, to find better ways of meeting the changing needs of their students and the communities in which they are located. In that same vein, NAESP will update these standards as better ways are identified to enhance the education of the children and youth of this nation.

These standards can serve as a basic guide for persons or groups interested in working to strengthen our nation by improving the quality of our schools.

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APPENDIX A

Checklist for Quality Indicators

The following checklist is intended to guide the review of each of the quality indicators included in the standards document. The checklist asks the respondent to identify the extent to which each of the quality indicators is evident within the school according to the following scale: Always Evident, Usually Evident, Seldom Evident, or Not Evident.

In most cases, persons using this checklist will find ready evidence as they move throughout the school and classrooms. However, some quality indicators will require visits with the school principal, teachers, staff, students, and/or parents to gain the required information, understandings, or evidence to make an accurate response.

NAESP believes that thoughtful observers will be able to identify each of the 21 "standards of excellence" within every quality school. This is not necessarily the case, however, in regard to the "quality indicators." These are simply intended to provide an indication of the current status of a particular standard and to cite some of the characteristics that might well be considered in a campaign to improve the quality of a particular school's program.

Completion of this checklist provides the necessary data to begin the improvement planning process suggested in Appendix B.

Space is provided at the end of each section for specific comments or suggestions.

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THERE IS A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S BELIEFS AND GOALS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
A copy of the statement is available.				
The statement has been developed cooperatively, with contributions from groups within the school community.				
The statement reflects staff consensus.				
Staff members can: ■ articulate the beliefs and goals ■ state specific instructional and noninstructional activities directed toward meeting those beliefs and goals, and ■ cite assessment procedures that monitor student performance.				
The statement is reviewed at least annually.				
The statement is consistent with the school district's philosophy.				
The stated goals are used in planning the school's educational objectives and activities.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

SUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF WELL-QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDED TO FULFILL THE SCHOOL'S GOALS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Staff members are qualified by training and background for the positions to which they are assigned.				
Each school has its own full-time principal.				
Classroom teachers are assigned to the school on a maximum 20:1 pupil/classroom teacher ratio.				
Actual pupil/classroom teacher ratio may vary from class to class with younger children receiving priority for a lower ratio.				
Instructional specialists are assigned based on student needs and programs (i.e., art, music, physical education, reading, media specialists, and others).				
Other professional staff are assigned to the school based on student needs (i.e., nurse, psychologist, social worker, counselor, special education teachers).				
Classified staff are provided commensurate with the size of the school and the nature of its programs (i.e., secretarial, custodial, paraprofessional, cafeteria).				
When student enrollment reaches 400, additional administrative assistance is provided to the principal.				
Parent and community volunteers play an active role in the school's program.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

PLACEMENT AND GROUPING PRACTICES ARE DETERMINED BY STUDENT NEEDS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Placement and Assignment				
The placement and assignment of students to classes and teachers reflect an assessment of each student's needs and each teacher's skills.				
The principal assigns students using information from teachers and parents.				
Grouping Practices				
There is a written statement of grouping policies based on the school's organizational philosophy.				
Current research regarding grouping practices is used in developing these policies.				
Grouping practices are flexible and serve the varying and changing needs and abilities of students.				
Promotion / Retention				
Promotion and retention policies are stated in writing, disseminated to all concerned, and followed.				
These policies take into account such factors as age, achievement, social adjustment, parental support, alternative programs, and teacher recommendations.				
The procedures for retention are clearly specified.				
Preventive or remedial programs are provided as soon as their need becomes evident.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

SUFFICIENT TIME IS ALLOCATED TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The school day provides time for meeting the school's stated objectives and requires at least five hours of instructional time exclusive of recess and the lunch period. (The time for less than full-day kindergarten is prorated.)				
The school year provides a minimum of 180 instructional days to meet stated objectives.				
The teacher's duty day is typically eight hours.				
The number of teacher-contract days allows at least ten days in excess of the pupil instructional days. These days are used for staff development, planning, and conferences.				
Principals are employed as full-time employees.				
Interruptions during academic learning time are kept to a minimum.				
Class time is used for appropriate learning tasks.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL'S VALUES, BELIEFS, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS INSPIRE PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S MISSION

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The principal knows and follows the NAESP Code of Ethics.				
The principal can articulate his or her personal values and beliefs when asked.				
The principal demonstrates 1) a sense of humor 2) self-confidence 3) enthusiasm 4) optimism 5) initiative 6) respect for others 7) consideration for the feelings of others 8) recognition and appreciation of the accomplishments of others 9) a high energy quotient 10) innovativeness				
The principal conveys high expectations for students, staff, and self.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL DEMONSTRATES SKILLS THAT ENABLE THE SCHOOL TO REACH ITS GOALS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The principal knows and helps teachers implement the curriculum.				
The principal knows and facilitates effective instructional practices.				
The principal observes classrooms on a regular basis.				
The principal confers with teachers immediately following observations, reinforcing effective practices and remediating ineffective ones.				
The principal employs techniques to promote efficient 1) deployment of students, staff, and volunteers 2) use of materials and equipment 3) operation of plant and facilities 4) scheduling of time				
The principal uses a variety of techniques to identify and resolve problems.				
The principal applies valid research findings to school practices.				
The principal makes decisions based on relevant information and existing conditions.				
The principal is able to communicate effectively with all segments of the school and the community, and welcomes communications from those groups.				
The principal encourages leadership by students, teachers, and community members.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THERE IS AN APPROVED CURRICULUM THAT DEFINES WHAT TEACHERS ARE TO TEACH AND WHAT CHILDREN ARE TO LEARN

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The curriculum is written and is used in planning the instructional program.				
The curriculum was developed cooperatively by the principal and the school staff, in consultation with parents.				
The curriculum identifies all areas of learning that are taught in the school.				
The established learning objectives are appropriate for the growth level of the individual child.				
All teachers work together for a continuum of learning.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CURRICULUM INCLUDES EXPERIENCES THAT PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH BASIC SKILLS NECESSARY TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY IN OUR SOCIETY

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Communication skills include the ability to read, write, speak, spell, and listen.				
Mathematics instruction emphasizes computation, application, and problem-solving skills.				
Science instruction includes an inquiry approach to the study of the natural and physical world.				
Social studies instruction includes study of the interrelationships of peoples and cultures to the historical, geographic, and economic factors in the environment.				
Fine arts instruction includes visual arts, music, dance, and drama.				
Health and physical education instruction, emphasizing motor development skills, provides opportunities to develop lifelong habits of healthy living.				
Decision making techniques are taught through problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills.				
Children take responsibility for their own education and are helped to develop strong study skills, use time efficiently, and complete tasks.				
All aspects of the curriculum make use of a comprehensive multimedia center and information technology.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CURRICULUM INCLUDES EXPERIENCES THAT ENABLE CHILDREN TO GROW IN KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPRECIATION OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Children have respect and appreciation for other students, teachers, staff, property, and the educational process.				
Children have healthy, positive self-concepts that enable them to feel successful academically, personally, and socially.				
Children recognize and value their own uniqueness and accept both their capabilities and limitations.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CURRICULUM IS SUPPORTED BY ADEQUATE FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Budget allocations are sufficient to meet the needs generated by the curriculum.				
Appropriate and relevant materials are available for each student.				
The school makes use of appropriate resources from other educational institutions, parents, business, industry, and service clubs.				
Equipment, supplies, and services needed to support the curriculum are readily available.				
The school principal, with staff involvement, determines the expenditure of funds available to accomplish the school's mission.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THERE IS A PLAN FOR MONITORING, ASSESSING, AND SUPERVISING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The instructional program is monitored to assure use of the written curriculum.				
Appropriate instructional materials are provided and used to reinforce the objectives of the curriculum.				
Teachers demonstrate thorough understanding of the written curriculum.				
Teachers use instructional techniques and strategies that are relevant to the curricular objectives and to research-based principals of learning.				
Teachers use formal and informal evaluation techniques and instruments to measure the curriculum's success.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

TEACHERS PLAN AND PROVIDE EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S MISSION

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Teachers believe all students can learn and expect them to succeed.				
Teachers use appropriate instructional strategies relevant to the objectives of the curriculum.				
Teachers allow sufficient time to present fully, demonstrate, and explain new content and skills.				
Teachers allow adequate opportunity to practice and master new skills.				
Teachers actively monitor student performance, give immediate response, and adjust instruction accordingly.				
Teachers use a variety of instructional grouping patterns, ranging from whole class to one-to-one instruction.				
Teachers continually diagnose academic needs and prescribe appropriate educational activities for individual students, considering learning styles and rates of learning.				
Teachers identify students with special needs and provide appropriate support.				
Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to create an orderly and comfortable classroom environment, conducive to learning.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT HOW TO LEARN AND TO VALUE LEARNING

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Students believe they can learn.				
Students understand that they share the responsibility for successful learning.				
Students are held accountable for doing quality work.				
Students give evidence of being able to apply what they have learned.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM ASSURES THE ATTAINMENT OF DESIRED STUDENT OUTCOMES

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The instructional program carries out the goals of the school district.				
Written and measurable educational objectives have been established and are consistent with the school's goals.				
Learning tasks are analyzed. Materials and activities used are linked to the objectives and goals of the curriculum.				
There is a heavy stress on academic learning. Minimal time is lost to such routines as taking roll, distributing supplies, and changing from one activity to another.				
Appropriate homework related to the school curriculum is assigned, corrected, reviewed for student learning, and returned promptly.				
Students are taught critical-thinking skills.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

EACH SCHOOL HAS A FULL-TIME, WELL-QUALIFIED PRINCIPAL

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The main focus of the principal is instructional leadership that increases teaching excellence.				
A principal's assignment is restricted to one school.				
The principal is qualified by training and background for this responsibility.				
The principal's experience includes at least three successful years of teaching at the elementary or middle school level.				
The principal actively pursues a program of professional development on a yearly basis.				
The principal is a member of local, state, and national professional associations and actively participates in their work.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

EACH SCHOOL HAS AN EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE STAFF

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Staff				
The design of the program is based on needs assessments and includes recommendations by the participants.				
The staff is routinely provided information regarding valid research and current practice.				
Inservice training programs incorporate knowledge of adult learning patterns and are relevant to actual responsibilities.				
Time and financial resources for staff development are provided within and outside the school day.				
Staff development programs are evaluated for effectiveness.				
The effectiveness of staff development programs is validated through improved teaching practices.				
Programs include training that prepares teachers to observe and coach one another on skills related to the goals of the school.				
Principals				
Staff development opportunities are provided and are based on identified job responsibilities.				
Time and financial resources are provided for attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences; for subscriptions to professional journals; and for contact with other principals and administrators.				
Training and development programs include such competencies as the following: 1) organizational theory, planning, and application 2) instructional leadership 3) evaluation of programs and personnel 4) professional and staff development 5) school law and political relationships 6) fiscal management 7) management of human and material resources 8) cultural and socioeconomic diversity				
Evaluations of training and development programs are based on subsequent performance on the job.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE SCHOOL'S ENVIRONMENT ENCOURAGES THE CAPABILITIES AND EMPHASIZES THE WORTH OF ALL INDIVIDUALS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Caring				
A plan exists to promote school/community interaction.				
Joint school/community activities take place regularly.				
Parents feel welcome in the school.				
Parents work cooperatively with teachers and students to develop plans for student progress.				
Parent education programs that meet the needs of the school community are provided.				
Respect				
Faculty and staff are committed to the mission of the school.				
Students and school personnel show mutual respect for each other.				
Conflict resolution procedures are applied fairly and consistently.				
The physical plant and school grounds are: 1) clean 2) aesthetically pleasing 3) Safe 4) well-maintained				
Trust				
Students are enthusiastic about learning.				
Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching.				
Parents demonstrate interest in and concern for their children's school.				
Morale				
Student, staff, and community morale is high.				
Students and school personnel support one another and work together harmoniously.				
School pride is evident among students, staff, and community.				
The teachers and the principal know and address students by name.				

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Social Development				
School personnel serve as models and reward appropriate behavior.				
There is a written code of conduct.				
The code is developed cooperatively by students, staff, and parents.				
The code is followed consistently.				
Students, staff, and parents accept and share responsibility for discipline.				
Discipline is used as a tool for learning rather than punishment.				
Academic Development				
The accomplishments of students and school personnel are appropriately recognized.				
Student work is attractively displayed.				
Attendance by students and staff is high.				
Students and staff are aware that outstanding performance is expected of them.				
Students and staff expect to be successful.				
School personnel believe that all children can learn.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

EVALUATION DATA ARE USED TO IMPROVE THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Validated evaluation techniques and instruments are used routinely.				
The evaluation process includes self-examination as well as assessment by external sources.				
Evaluations relate to the attainment of particular goals.				
A variety of assessments are used.				
The results of teacher-made and curricular specific tests are used to make instructional decisions.				
Standardized tests are used to provide comparative data.				
Results of evaluations are made available to all interested parties.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ARE BASED ON MASTERY OF DEFINED OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRICULUM

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Mastery assessments and the curriculum are matched.				
Common criteria for curriculum mastery and student evaluation are written, distributed, and followed.				
Assessment results are used to develop appropriate educational plans for each student.				
The results of assessment and evaluation are reported to parents.				
A cumulative academic record is maintained for each student.				
Positive recognition is given to students as they master curriculum objectives.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

A FAIR AND SYSTEMATIC PROCEDURE IS FOLLOWED FOR THE EVALUATION OF ALL TEACHERS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Each teacher knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.				
Evaluation is based on observed performance, amount of assistance given, and what students have learned.				
The evaluation process is cooperative and positive.				
The system of evaluation distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.				
A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.				
There are written procedures that provide due process for dismissing incompetent teachers.				
There is a reward system for teaching performance significantly above the norm.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

A FAIR AND SYSTEMATIC PROCEDURE IS FOLLOWED FOR THE EVALUATION OF ALL PRINCIPALS

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Each principal knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.				
Evaluation is based on the degree to which the school grows in accomplishing its mission.				
Evaluation is based on firsthand data and evidence.				
The system of evaluation distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.				
A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.				
There are written procedures that provide due process for dismissing incompetent principals.				
Performance significantly above the norm is rewarded.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

APPENDIX B

Planning Guide for School Improvement

Appendix B helps persons identify those standards where efforts for improvement should be focused.

1. Using the data from the Appendix A checklist, a composite judgment of the extent of improvement indicated in each standard should be made according to the following scale: Minimal, Some, or Extensive. Space is provided for identification of a plan for improvement.
2. The 21 standards should be reviewed, put in priority order, and given a target date for completion.

Completion of Appendix B will provide a time line and plan of action to guide the school staff in their efforts to improve the quality of the school.

ORGANIZATION

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
There is a written statement of the school's beliefs and goals. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
Sufficient numbers of well-qualified personnel are provided to fulfill the school's goals. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
Placement and grouping practices are determined by student needs. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
Sufficient time is allocated to accomplish the school's educational objectives. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					

LEADERSHIP

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The principal's values, beliefs, and personal characteristics inspire people to accomplish the school's mission.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

The principal demonstrates skills that enable the school to reach its goals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

CURRICULUM

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
There is an approved curriculum that defines what teachers are to teach and what children are to learn. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
The curriculum includes experiences that provide children with basic skills necessary to function effectively in our society. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
The curriculum includes experiences that enable children to grow in knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of themselves and others. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
There is a plan for monitoring, assessing, and supervising implementation of the curriculum. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
The curriculum is supported by adequate financial and material resources. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					

INSTRUCTION

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
Teachers plan and provide effective instruction to accomplish the school's mission. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
Students are taught how to learn and to value learning. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
The instructional program assures the attainment of desired student outcomes. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
Each school has a full-time, well-qualified principal. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					
Each school has an effective staff development program for all members of the staff. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT**					

SCHOOL CLIMATE

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The school's environment encourages the capabilities and emphasizes the worth of all individuals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
Evaluation data are used to improve the school's program.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Student assessment and evaluation are based on mastery of defined objectives of the curriculum.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

A fair and systematic procedure is followed for the evaluation of all teachers.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

A fair and systematic procedure is followed for the evaluation of all principals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT